

# Annual Report 2025

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## LETTER FROM THE BOARD

On behalf of the Board of Directors and my own, I would like to express our gratitude and sincere appreciation to our valued partners, particularly Save the Children International, Microsoft Corporation, UNDP, and UNOCHA for their generous support in terms of financial assistance, software provisions, and training opportunities that have significantly contributed to the successful operations of CEF.

We are truly thankful for the strong partnership we have forged with each of these organizations, which has played a pivotal role in enabling CEF to achieve its objectives effectively. Over the past nine years, CEF has experienced remarkable growth in its project portfolio, operational capabilities, funding sources, and workforce. These accomplishments are a testament to the unwavering commitment, dedication, collaborative efforts, and determination of our staff members who have worked tirelessly to facilitate the mobilization of \$3,199,462.74 and provide assistance to **556,272** beneficiaries in South Sudan.

Congratulations to all the dedicated individuals at CEF for their outstanding contributions. Let us continue to uphold the high standards of work and maintain this positive momentum moving forward.



Malual Jacob Runrach,

Secretary/ED.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

To empower communities to improve their healthy living conditions, fight poverty, eradicate illiteracy and discrimination against women.

## **CEF VISION**

CEF envisions a free, empowered, and healthy society where all people are equal.

## **HISTORY OF CEF**

Charity and Empowerment Foundation (CEF) is a non-profit organization established in 2017 by Dr. Gai Chol Paul, during his pursuit of a doctorate degree at Walden University. Inspired by the concept of positive social change instilled in him by Walden University, Dr. Paul took the initiative to create CEF with the primary objective of empowering communities and improving their overall living conditions. With a focus on combating poverty, eliminating illiteracy, and addressing gender discrimination, CEF is working tirelessly to create a more equitable and just society.

CEF initiatives span across various areas, including health enhancement, education advancement, protection strengthening, WASH improvement, shelter and NFI provision, nutrition promotion, and livelihood improvement. These efforts are primarily targeted towards remote and underserved regions, where accessing adequate resources and essential services remains a significant challenge. Through these thematic areas, CEF works to strengthen community resilience, improve well-being, and ensure that vulnerable populations receive the support they need to live with dignity.

By working closely with rural communities, CEF strives to make a lasting impact and contribute to a healthier and more prosperous world for all. Since 2017, CEF has been mobilizing resources from International Organizations, UN agencies, International Corporations, and the board membership contribution.

## ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS.

CEF has seven systematic goals to achieve by 2030. The figure below corresponds to programs CEF is implementing.



## CEF PHILOSOPHY AND BELIEFS

CEF places great importance on the value of **advocacy**. By engaging in advocacy efforts, CEF works to influence decision-makers in the development, modification, and implementation of policies. The focus of CEF's advocacy work is on addressing issues impacting children, their primary caregivers, and relatives. Through advocacy initiatives, CEF aims to enhance the capacity of duty bearers to fulfill their responsibilities in terms of policies, practices, and legislation, while also empowering children, caregivers, and local civil society members to assert their rights and hold others accountable.

Additionally, CEF recognizes the significance of **behavioral change communication** (BCC) as a powerful tool for fostering positive social change within the communities where its projects are implemented. By selecting appropriate communication channels and crafting tailored messages and strategies, CEF utilizes BCC to promote shifts in knowledge,

attitudes, norms, beliefs, and behaviors, ultimately facilitating greater awareness and understanding of the change process.

Moreover, CEF acknowledges the impact of **peer education** in disseminating information within target communities through individuals' peers. Through training peer educators, CEF facilitates the spread of positive social change perceptions in project communities, encouraging the adoption of favorable behaviors and supporting the sustainability of desired transformations.

Furthermore, CEF places emphasis on **enhancing the capacities of local communities and their institutions** as a means of driving significant positive changes in project areas. By empowering women to recognize their potential and assert their rights in regions where CEF operates, and by strengthening the capabilities of local institutions, CEF has successfully fostered enduring positive outcomes even after the conclusion of its projects.

Lastly, CEF values **innovation** as a key driver of project success. By implementing innovative approaches to project execution, CEF upholds the highest quality standards, reduces costs, meets deadlines, garners support from donors, partners, and communities, and establishes and maintains its reputation and credibility.

## **STATISTICS AND PROFILES OF BENEFICIARIES**

### **Child Protection and Case Management Systems**

Child protection remains one of the most urgent humanitarian and development priorities in the Abyei Special Administrative Area and Northern Bahr El Ghazal State, where conflict, displacement, economic hardship, and weakened social systems continue to expose children to serious protection risks. In these fragile contexts, children face heightened vulnerability to neglect, abuse, exploitation, family separation, early marriage, psychosocial distress, and other harmful practices. In response, the CEF implemented a comprehensive Child Protection and Case Management system designed to strengthen community-based structures, enhance institutional capacity, and ensure that vulnerable children receive timely, appropriate, and quality support. Through its integrated protection interventions in Abyei alone, CEF reached 15,711 individuals, while in Aweil East and Aweil Center Counties, protection services reached an additional 6,000 vulnerable individuals, including children, caregivers, and community members.

CEF's approach prioritizes both prevention and response, recognizing that sustainable child protection requires strong community ownership and functioning referral systems. A cornerstone of this strategy was the establishment and reactivation of Community-Based Child Protection Networks (CBCPNs) in targeted communities. These networks, composed of respected local leaders, women representatives, youth members, teachers, and volunteers, were trained on child rights, safeguarding principles, identification of protection risks, and referral pathways. By strengthening these grassroots structures, CEF ensured that communities themselves became active agents in protecting children. CBCPN members now serve as frontline responders, identifying children at risk, conducting awareness activities, and linking families to appropriate services. Their presence has significantly improved early detection of protection concerns and increased community confidence in reporting cases.

In parallel, CEF implemented a structured case management system to provide individualized support to children facing protection risks. Trained caseworkers conducted intake assessments, developed case plans, facilitated referrals, and provided follow-up support to ensure that each child's best interests were upheld. Through these systems, children experiencing neglect, abuse, exploitation, or family separation received tailored assistance, including counseling, psychosocial support, referral to health services, provision of essential non-food items, and emergency cash support when necessary. Particular attention was given to unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), who are among the most vulnerable in displacement settings. Family tracing and reunification processes were carried out in collaboration with community networks and relevant authorities, ensuring safe and sustainable reintegration wherever possible. These interventions contributed to restoring family unity and strengthening household stability.

To provide safe environments where children could heal, learn, and interact positively, CEF established two Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS) in Abyei. These spaces offered structured recreational and psychosocial activities, serving as protective environments for children exposed to trauma and instability. Facilitators were trained in child development, safeguarding standards, Psychological First Aid (PFA), and stress management, ensuring that services delivered within the CFS met quality and ethical standards. The spaces also functioned as entry points for identifying children requiring more specialized case management services. By creating safe and inclusive environments, CEF reduced children's

exposure to unsafe conditions and promoted resilience, emotional recovery, and social cohesion.

Capacity building formed another critical component of CEF's child protection strategy. Frontline staff, social workers, volunteers, and community facilitators received targeted training on child protection principles, safeguarding policies, case documentation, GBV referral pathways, and psychosocial support. In Aweil East and Aweil Center Counties, these trained protection officers and volunteers were instrumental in reaching 6,000 vulnerable individuals, ensuring that services were delivered transparently and effectively. Strengthened technical capacity improved coordination with local authorities and service providers, resulting in more efficient referral systems and enhanced quality of care for children and families.

Prevention efforts were equally central to CEF's programming. Large-scale awareness campaigns were conducted through community dialogues, radio messaging, and Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials. In Abyei, these campaigns contributed to reaching 15,711 individuals with messages promoting child rights, prevention of harmful practices, and the importance of reporting abuse. Community engagement activities fostered dialogue around sensitive issues such as early marriage, neglect, and child exploitation, encouraging collective responsibility for child safety. By involving men, women, youth, and local leaders, CEF cultivated community-driven solutions and strengthened protective social norms.

The integration of feedback and accountability mechanisms further strengthened the child protection system. Community members were encouraged to provide feedback on services, raise concerns, and participate in decision-making processes. This participatory approach enhanced transparency, improved trust between CEF and communities, and ensured that interventions remained responsive to evolving needs. Collaboration with local authorities, humanitarian partners, and protection actors reinforced referral pathways and reduced service gaps.

Overall, CEF's Child Protection and Case Management Systems have contributed to strengthened community-based protection mechanisms, improved identification and

response to child protection cases, enhanced capacity of frontline responders, and increased awareness of child rights among tens of thousands of individuals. By reaching 15,711 people in Abyei and 6,000 in Northern Bahr El Ghazal through integrated protection activities, CEF has not only addressed immediate risks but also laid the foundation for sustainable, community-owned child protection systems.

Through its holistic model; combining prevention, case management, family tracing and reunification, safe spaces, and capacity strengthening; CEF continues to work toward a future where every child is protected from harm, supported to recover from adversity, and empowered to thrive in safe and nurturing environments.



Figure 1: Children play in CFS in Abyei, 2025



Figure 2: Training of Child Protection Actors in Abyei, 2025

## Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Prevention and Response

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) remains a pervasive and deeply rooted protection concern in the Abyei Special Administrative Area and Northern Bahr El Ghazal State, particularly in contexts affected by displacement, economic instability, and weakened social systems. Women and girls face heightened risks of intimate partner violence, early and forced marriage, sexual exploitation, and other forms of abuse, while social stigma and limited access to services often prevent survivors from seeking support. In response to these challenges, the CEF implemented comprehensive GBV prevention and response interventions as part of its broader protection programming. Through integrated activities in Abyei, CEF reached 15,711 individuals with protection and GBV awareness services, while in Aweil East and Aweil Center Counties, an additional 6,000 vulnerable individuals benefited from targeted protection and GBV-related interventions.

CEF's GBV programming adopts a survivor-centered approach that prioritizes safety, confidentiality, dignity, and informed consent. The organization strengthened community-based protection structures by integrating GBV prevention into Community-Based Child Protection Networks (CBCPNs) and broader protection committees. These networks were trained to identify GBV risks, provide safe referrals, and promote prevention messaging within their communities. By embedding GBV awareness within trusted local structures, CEF ensured that prevention efforts were culturally sensitive, community-owned, and sustainable.

A central component of the GBV response was the establishment and operationalization of Women and Girls Friendly Spaces (WGFS) in Aweil East and Aweil Center Counties. These safe spaces provided secure environments where women and girls could access psychosocial support, counseling services, life skills training, and dignity kits. The WGFS served not only as service delivery points but also as empowerment hubs where women and girls could build confidence, strengthen peer support networks, and access information about their rights. Through these spaces, survivors of GBV received tailored counseling and referral services, contributing to improved emotional well-being and recovery outcomes.

In addition to safe space services, CEF strengthened case management systems to ensure that GBV survivors received holistic and coordinated support. Trained protection officers and caseworkers provided confidential intake, assessment, and referral services aligned with established GBV referral pathways. Frontline staff in Aweil East and Aweil Center received intensive training on GBV principles, safeguarding, and referral mechanisms, enhancing their capacity to respond effectively

and ethically. These trained personnel played a key role in reaching 6,000 vulnerable individuals, ensuring that services were accessible and responsive to community needs.

Prevention efforts were delivered through large-scale awareness campaigns, community dialogues, and radio messaging. In Abyei, awareness activities formed part of broader protection outreach that reached 15,711 individuals, promoting messages on the prevention of violence against women and girls, the importance of reporting abuse, and the availability of support services. Community engagement strategies targeted men, women, youth, and traditional leaders, fostering dialogue on harmful social norms that perpetuate violence. By encouraging open discussions and community reflection, CEF worked to shift attitudes and strengthen collective accountability for preventing GBV.

The commemoration of global advocacy events, including the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, served as a powerful platform to mobilize community participation and amplify prevention messaging. Through public campaigns, dialogues, and awareness sessions, CEF reinforced the message that violence against women and girls is unacceptable and preventable. These initiatives strengthened community solidarity and increased visibility of protection services.

CEF also integrated GBV risk mitigation into emergency cash assistance programs targeting returnees and vulnerable households. Through the “Rapid Funding for Lifesaving Protection Services for Returnees from Sudan” project, 300 households benefited from cash assistance to meet their basic needs such as food, shelter, and hygiene. By addressing economic vulnerabilities, the project reduced exposure to negative coping mechanisms that may increase the risk of exploitation or abuse. Cash distribution processes were accompanied by sensitization sessions and post-distribution monitoring to ensure transparency and assess protection outcomes.

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services were closely linked to GBV response efforts. Facilitators and staff were trained in Psychological First Aid (PFA), stress management, and trauma-informed care to provide immediate emotional support to survivors. Survivors requiring specialized services were referred to appropriate health and psychosocial providers. This integrated approach ensured that GBV response extended beyond immediate safety to include long-term recovery and resilience-building.

Safety audits conducted in targeted communities further strengthened GBV prevention efforts. By identifying high-risk locations and environmental vulnerabilities, CEF collaborated with community members to implement practical measures to enhance safety. These actions contributed to improved community awareness of risk factors and collective responsibility for creating safer public spaces.

Throughout its GBV programming, CEF prioritized accountability and community feedback. Beneficiaries were encouraged to provide input on service quality and accessibility, ensuring that interventions remained responsive and respectful of survivors' needs. Collaboration with local authorities, humanitarian actors, and service providers strengthened referral pathways and reduced service gaps.

Overall, CEF's GBV Prevention and Response interventions contributed to increased awareness, strengthened community-based protection mechanisms, improved access to survivor-centered services, and enhanced capacity of frontline responders. By reaching 15,711 individuals in Abyei and 6,000 in Northern Bahr El Ghazal through integrated protection programming, CEF advanced its commitment to protecting women and girls from violence and promoting dignity, equality, and safety.

Through sustained prevention efforts, survivor-centered case management, safe space programming, and community engagement, CEF continues to work toward a future where women and girls live free from violence, empowered to participate fully in social and economic life, and supported by communities that uphold their rights and well-being.



*Figure 3: Commemoration of 16 Days of Activisms in Abyei, 2025*



Figure 4: Stakeholders' dialogue in Aweil East, 2025

## **Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)**

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) is a critical component of humanitarian response in fragile and conflict-affected settings such as the Abyei Special Administrative Area and Northern Bahr El Ghazal State. Prolonged conflict, displacement, economic hardship, and exposure to violence have left many children, women, and families experiencing trauma, anxiety, stress, grief, and other psychosocial challenges. In recognition of the profound impact of these stressors on individual and community well-being, the CEF integrated comprehensive MHPSS services across its protection programming. Through its interventions in Abyei, CEF reached 15,711 individuals with integrated protection services that included psychosocial support components, while in Aweil East and Aweil Center Counties, an additional 6,000 vulnerable individuals benefited from protection activities that incorporated MHPSS interventions.

CEF's MHPSS approach is community-based, survivor-centered, and grounded in internationally recognized humanitarian standards. The organization recognizes that mental health and psychosocial well-being are not only individual concerns but also community-wide issues that require collective healing, supportive environments, and strengthened coping mechanisms. Therefore, MHPSS services were integrated into child protection systems, GBV response programming, emergency response initiatives, and community awareness campaigns to ensure accessibility and inclusivity.

A key pillar of CEF's MHPSS strategy was the establishment of two Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS) in the Abyei Special Administrative Area. These spaces provided structured and safe environments where children affected by conflict and displacement could participate in recreational, educational, and

psychosocial activities. Within these spaces, children engaged in structured play, creative arts, storytelling, peer interaction, and life skills sessions designed to promote emotional expression and resilience. Facilitators were carefully selected and trained in child development, safeguarding principles, Psychological First Aid (PFA), and stress management techniques to ensure quality service delivery. The CFS not only supported children's emotional recovery but also functioned as safe entry points for identifying children in need of specialized case management or referral to higher-level mental health services.

In addition to child-focused interventions, CEF integrated psychosocial support into case management systems for vulnerable children, unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), and survivors of gender-based violence. Trained caseworkers provided basic counseling, emotional support, and follow-up visits to help individuals process traumatic experiences and rebuild coping capacities. Survivors requiring more advanced mental health care were referred to specialized service providers through established referral pathways. By linking MHPSS services with protection systems, CEF ensured a holistic response that addressed both immediate safety concerns and long-term emotional well-being.

Community-level psychosocial support was also strengthened through awareness sessions and dialogue forums that reached large segments of the population. In Abyei, MHPSS messaging was embedded within broader protection outreach that reached 15,711 individuals, raising awareness about stress management, trauma recovery, positive coping strategies, and the importance of seeking support. These sessions encouraged open discussions around mental health, helping to reduce stigma and normalize conversations about emotional well-being. In Aweil East and Aweil Center Counties, similar approaches were used to reach 6,000 vulnerable individuals, particularly among returnee populations who had experienced displacement from Sudan.

Capacity building played a central role in sustaining MHPSS services. CEF trained frontline staff, community volunteers, and facilitators on Psychological First Aid (PFA), basic counseling techniques, stress management, and self-care strategies. These trainings enhanced the ability of local actors to provide immediate emotional support during crises and refer complex cases appropriately. By equipping community members with these skills, CEF strengthened local resilience and ensured that psychosocial support could continue beyond the lifespan of specific projects.

Women and Girls Friendly Spaces (WGFS) in Aweil East and Aweil Center further reinforced psychosocial support services for women and adolescent girls. These spaces provided confidential counseling, peer support sessions, and life skills training, offering survivors of violence and vulnerable women safe environments to share experiences and rebuild confidence. The integration

of psychosocial support within these spaces helped reduce isolation, strengthen social networks, and promote healing.

Emergency response activities also incorporated psychosocial components. During cash assistance distributions and other emergency interventions, beneficiaries received sensitization on stress management and available support services. Post-distribution monitoring provided opportunities to assess not only economic outcomes but also psychosocial well-being. This integrated approach acknowledged the interconnected nature of economic hardship and emotional distress.

Community feedback mechanisms further enhanced the responsiveness of MHPSS services. Beneficiaries were encouraged to share experiences and suggestions, ensuring that interventions remained culturally appropriate and responsive to evolving needs. Collaboration with local authorities and humanitarian actors strengthened referral systems and improved coordination for specialized mental health care.

Through these integrated efforts, CEF contributed to improved psychosocial well-being among thousands of individuals. Children participating in Child-Friendly Spaces demonstrated increased social interaction, improved emotional expression, and strengthened coping skills. Survivors of violence reported feeling safer and more supported through counseling services. Community members expressed greater understanding of mental health issues and increased willingness to seek help when needed.

Overall, CEF's MHPSS programming has been instrumental in promoting resilience, reducing stigma around mental health, and fostering supportive community environments. By reaching 15,711 individuals in Abyei and 6,000 in Northern Bahr El Ghazal through integrated protection and psychosocial interventions, CEF has strengthened both individual recovery and community cohesion. The organization's holistic model—combining safe spaces, counseling services, capacity building, awareness campaigns, and referral systems—ensures that mental health and psychosocial well-being remain central to protection and development efforts.

Moving forward, CEF remains committed to expanding community-based MHPSS services, strengthening specialized referral pathways, integrating mental health into livelihood and nutrition programs, and continuing to build the capacity of local actors. Through sustained investment in psychosocial well-being, CEF contributes to resilient communities where children, women, and families can recover from adversity, rebuild hope, and thrive despite ongoing challenges.

## Emergency Cash Assistance and Protection for Returnees

The influx of returnees from Sudan into Northern Bahr El Ghazal State created urgent humanitarian needs that required a rapid, coordinated, and protection-sensitive response. Many returnee families arrived in Aweil East and Aweil Center Counties with limited resources, inadequate shelter, and little access to food, hygiene supplies, or essential services. The sudden population increase placed additional strain on already vulnerable host communities, exacerbating risks related to poverty, exploitation, child protection concerns, and gender-based violence. In response to these challenges, the CEF implemented the project titled “Rapid Funding for Lifesaving Protection Services for Returnees from Sudan,” reaching 6,000 vulnerable individuals through integrated emergency cash assistance and protection interventions.

The project adopted a protection-sensitive cash-based assistance model designed not only to address immediate basic needs but also to reduce exposure to harmful coping mechanisms. Upon arrival, many returnee households faced heightened risks of exploitation, child labor, early marriage, and other protection concerns due to economic desperation. By providing cash and voucher assistance, CEF enabled families to prioritize their most urgent needs, including food, shelter repairs, hygiene materials, and essential household items. This flexible approach restored dignity and choice to beneficiaries while reducing dependency on negative survival strategies.

Beneficiary registration and verification processes were conducted by trained protection officers and community volunteers to ensure transparency, fairness, and accountability. Special attention was given to households headed by women, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and families caring for unaccompanied or separated children. Protection mainstreaming principles were applied throughout the distribution process to safeguard confidentiality, prevent exclusion, and ensure equitable access. Sensitization sessions conducted prior to distributions informed beneficiaries about their rights, complaint mechanisms, and referral pathways for protection services.

As part of targeted child-focused support, 400 vulnerable children received cash assistance to address urgent protection and basic needs. This targeted support helped mitigate risks associated with school dropout, neglect, and economic exploitation. The cash assistance was complemented by post-distribution monitoring to assess utilization patterns, beneficiary satisfaction, and potential protection outcomes. Findings indicated that households primarily used funds for food, shelter improvements, healthcare, and clothing, contributing to increased household stability and reduced stress.

Beyond direct financial assistance, CEF integrated child protection and GBV services into the emergency response framework. Protection officers conducted awareness sessions alongside cash distributions, reaching the broader group of 6,000 vulnerable individuals with key messages on child safeguarding, prevention of gender-based violence, and available support services. These sessions strengthened community awareness and encouraged early reporting of protection concerns. The integration of protection messaging ensured that economic support was reinforced by knowledge and access to services.

Women and Girls Friendly Spaces (WGFS) were also activated to support female returnees and host community members. These spaces provided counseling, psychosocial support, dignity kits, and life skills training, offering women and girls safe environments to share concerns and access assistance. For many returnees who had experienced trauma during displacement, the availability of confidential support services was critical for emotional recovery and resilience building.

Family tracing and reunification services were provided for unaccompanied and separated children identified during the influx. Trained caseworkers collaborated with community leaders and protection networks to verify cases and facilitate safe reunification processes. These efforts ensured that separated children were not left without protective care and that families were supported in reintegration.

Safety audits conducted in key community sites further enhanced protection outcomes. By assessing potential risk areas such as distribution points, water access points, and communal spaces, CEF worked with community members to implement mitigation measures. This proactive approach reduced exposure to harassment and violence, particularly for women and girls.

The emergency response also strengthened community-based protection structures. Community-Based Child Protection Networks (CBCPNs) and other volunteers received refresher training on identifying vulnerable returnees and linking them to services. By reinforcing local protection mechanisms, CEF ensured that support extended beyond the immediate distribution period and contributed to longer-term resilience.

Coordination with local authorities and humanitarian actors played a crucial role in ensuring comprehensive service delivery. CEF maintained strong referral pathways with health facilities, psychosocial support providers, and other protection partners to address complex cases requiring specialized intervention. Feedback mechanisms allowed beneficiaries to raise concerns, provide input, and report any irregularities, reinforcing accountability and transparency.

The integration of emergency cash assistance with protection services significantly contributed to stabilizing vulnerable households and strengthening community resilience. By addressing both economic and protection needs simultaneously, CEF reduced immediate suffering while mitigating longer-term risks. Beneficiaries reported increased ability to meet basic needs, improved household stability, and greater awareness of available protection services.

Overall, through the Rapid Funding for Lifesaving Protection Services for Returnees project, CEF successfully reached 6,000 vulnerable individuals with integrated cash and protection assistance, including targeted support to 400 vulnerable children. The project not only alleviated immediate humanitarian pressures but also reinforced community-based protection systems and enhanced coordination among stakeholders.

CEF's emergency cash and protection programming demonstrates that economic assistance, when delivered through a protection-sensitive lens, can play a transformative role in safeguarding vulnerable populations. By combining financial support with awareness-raising, case management, safe spaces, and referral systems, CEF contributed to restoring dignity, reducing vulnerability, and promoting resilience among returnees and host communities facing complex humanitarian challenges.



*Figure 5: Cash Distribution in Aweil Centre, 2025*

## Food Security, Livelihoods, and Economic Empowerment

Food insecurity and limited livelihood opportunities remain among the most pressing challenges facing communities in the Abyei Special Administrative Area and surrounding regions. Prolonged conflict, displacement, economic instability, climate-related shocks, and limited access to productive assets have significantly weakened household resilience. Many families rely on subsistence agriculture, informal labor, or humanitarian assistance, leaving them vulnerable to recurring shocks and negative coping strategies. In response to these structural vulnerabilities, the CEF implemented comprehensive Food Security and Livelihood (FSL) interventions aimed at strengthening economic resilience, promoting self-reliance, and improving household income generation capacity.

Through a partnership with UNDP and funding from UNISFA, CEF implemented an FSL project across five counties, including Abyei Municipality, directly registering 250 beneficiaries, comprising 130 females and 120 males. The beneficiaries included youth aged 18 to 35, persons with disabilities, internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees, and members of the host community. Each county registered 50 beneficiaries, ensuring equitable geographic distribution and gender balance. The project prioritized inclusive participation, recognizing that sustainable economic recovery must engage both vulnerable groups and host communities to strengthen social cohesion and shared prosperity.

A central component of the project was the promotion of income-generating activities and entrepreneurship development. Beneficiaries received training in basic business management, financial literacy, record keeping, and market analysis. These capacity-building sessions enhanced participants' understanding of enterprise development and equipped them with practical skills to establish or expand small businesses. The training emphasized sustainability, diversification of income sources, and adaptation to local market demands.

Following training, beneficiaries received small grants to launch or strengthen micro-enterprises. These grants enabled participants to invest in livestock rearing, petty trade, tailoring, food processing, and other locally viable economic activities. By providing startup capital, CEF addressed one of the most significant barriers to entrepreneurship, lack of access to financial resources. The small grants approach empowered individuals to make strategic investments aligned with their skills and community needs, fostering ownership and accountability.

In addition to entrepreneurship support, the project introduced innovative technologies such as Block Interlock Machines to promote sustainable construction and generate employment

opportunities. The introduction of this technology not only contributed to improved housing and infrastructure but also created new income streams for trained youth. By integrating skills development with practical technology application, CEF enhanced long-term employability and local economic development.

Beyond enterprise development, CEF implemented an integrated Food Security and Livelihood project with a strong nutrition-sensitive component, targeting 300 households, approximately 1,800 individuals in the Abyei Special Administrative Area. This initiative aimed to improve access to nutrition-sensitive food production systems while strengthening economic resilience. The project recognized the direct link between food security, nutrition outcomes, and household income stability.

Participating households received training on nutrition-sensitive agriculture practices designed to improve both productivity and dietary diversity. These trainings focused on crop diversification, soil management, sustainable farming techniques, and climate-resilient practices. By equipping households with practical agricultural skills, CEF contributed to increased local food production and reduced dependency on external food assistance.

Kitchen gardening was promoted as a household-level strategy to enhance food availability and diversity. Families were supported in establishing small-scale vegetable gardens within their compounds, enabling them to grow nutrient-rich crops such as leafy greens and vegetables. This approach increased access to fresh produce, improved dietary diversity, and reduced household expenditure on food. The integration of kitchen gardening with nutrition education strengthened awareness of balanced diets and proper food utilization.

To reinforce financial resilience, the project established five Savings and Loan Groups within target communities. These groups provided members with structured opportunities to save regularly, access small loans, and invest in income-generating activities. Savings and Loan Groups played a critical role in promoting financial inclusion, particularly for women and vulnerable households with limited access to formal banking services. Members were trained in group governance, record keeping, and transparent financial management to ensure sustainability and accountability.

The economic empowerment of women was a cross-cutting priority throughout FSL programming. Women constituted a significant proportion of beneficiaries, reflecting CEF's commitment to gender equality and inclusive development. By enhancing women's access to training, grants, and savings groups, the project contributed to improved household decision-making power, increased income control, and strengthened family well-being.

The combined impact of livelihood grants, entrepreneurship training, agricultural support, and savings mechanisms contributed to measurable improvements in household resilience. Beneficiaries reported increased income stability, improved food access, and greater capacity to withstand economic shocks. Youth participants gained practical skills that enhanced employability and reduced vulnerability to exploitation or risky migration.

CEF's FSL interventions also promoted social cohesion by engaging diverse community groups, including IDPs, returnees, host populations, and persons with disabilities. By ensuring inclusive beneficiary selection and equal access to opportunities, the project mitigated potential tensions arising from resource competition. Community-level engagement strengthened trust and collaboration, fostering an environment conducive to sustainable development.

Monitoring and follow-up visits were conducted to assess business performance, agricultural productivity, and group savings progress. These monitoring mechanisms allowed CEF to provide technical guidance and identify emerging challenges. Beneficiary feedback informed adaptive management decisions, ensuring responsiveness to evolving community needs.

Overall, through direct livelihood support to 250 beneficiaries under the UNDP-UNISFA partnership and integrated FSL and nutrition assistance to 300 households (approximately 1,800 individuals), CEF strengthened economic resilience and food security in vulnerable communities. These interventions contributed to reduced dependency on humanitarian assistance, enhanced income diversification, and improved nutrition outcomes.

CEF's Food Security, Livelihoods, and Economic Empowerment programming demonstrates a comprehensive approach that addresses both immediate food needs and long-term economic sustainability. By combining entrepreneurship development, agricultural training, small grants, savings mechanisms, and inclusive targeting, CEF supports communities in transitioning from vulnerability to resilience.

Moving forward, CEF aims to expand access to microfinance opportunities, scale up climate-resilient agriculture initiatives, integrate digital financial literacy, and strengthen market linkages for small enterprises. Through continued investment in economic empowerment, CEF contributes to building self-reliant communities capable of sustaining livelihoods, improving food security, and fostering inclusive economic growth.



Figure 6: Empowered youth in Abyei, 2025

## **Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture and Community Financial Resilience**

Malnutrition, food insecurity, and limited access to financial services remain interconnected challenges affecting vulnerable households in the Abyei Special Administrative Area. Conflict-related disruptions, displacement, climate variability, and constrained livelihood opportunities have significantly weakened household food production systems and income stability. Many families rely on limited crop varieties and seasonal income sources, resulting in poor dietary diversity and heightened vulnerability to economic shocks. In response to these systemic challenges, the CEF implemented an integrated Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture and Community Financial Resilience initiative designed to improve household nutrition outcomes while strengthening long-term economic self-reliance.

Through an integrated Food Security and Livelihood (FSL) project with a dedicated nutrition component, CEF targeted 300 households, representing approximately 1,800 individuals in the Abyei Special Administrative Area. The initiative sought to enhance access to diverse and nutritious food, promote sustainable agricultural practices, and establish community-based financial systems that support resilience and self-sufficiency. The project was grounded in the understanding that food

security alone is insufficient without improved dietary practices, nutrition knowledge, and financial stability.

A core pillar of the initiative was the promotion of nutrition-sensitive agriculture. Participating households received training on diversified crop production, soil management, climate-resilient farming techniques, and sustainable agricultural practices. These sessions emphasized the importance of producing nutrient-rich crops that contribute to balanced diets rather than focusing solely on staple production. By encouraging diversification into vegetables and other micronutrient-rich foods, the project addressed underlying causes of malnutrition linked to limited dietary variety.

Kitchen gardening was introduced as a practical and accessible strategy to enhance household-level food availability. Families were supported in establishing small vegetable gardens within their residential compounds, enabling year-round access to fresh produce. The cultivation of leafy greens and vegetables increased micronutrient intake, particularly among children and pregnant or lactating women. Kitchen gardening not only reduced household food expenditures but also empowered families to take ownership of their nutritional well-being.

Nutrition education formed an essential complementary component of the project. Household-level awareness sessions and cooking demonstrations were conducted to promote balanced diets, appropriate food preparation methods, and optimal utilization of locally available ingredients. These sessions emphasized the nutritional needs of children, adolescents, and women, fostering informed decision-making around food consumption. By combining production support with behavioral change communication, CEF ensured that improved agricultural output translated into tangible nutritional gains.

Recognizing that financial instability often undermines food security, the project simultaneously strengthened community-based financial resilience mechanisms. CEF established five Savings and Loan Groups within target communities, providing structured platforms for collective saving and access to small loans. Members were trained in group governance, record keeping, and transparent financial management practices to ensure sustainability and accountability. These groups enabled participants to mobilize local resources, access credit for income-generating activities, and build financial buffers against emergencies.

Savings and Loan Groups played a transformative role in promoting financial inclusion, particularly among women and vulnerable households with limited access to formal banking systems. By participating in regular savings cycles, members developed disciplined financial habits and gained access to small loans that could be invested in agricultural inputs, small businesses, or emergency

needs. This access to community-managed credit reduced reliance on exploitative lending practices and strengthened economic autonomy.

The integration of financial resilience mechanisms with nutrition-sensitive agriculture created a mutually reinforcing model. Households that increased agricultural production were able to sell surplus produce and deposit earnings into savings groups, while savings access enabled reinvestment in farming tools, seeds, or small livestock. This cyclical reinforcement enhanced income diversification and reduced vulnerability to seasonal shocks.

Women's participation was prioritized throughout the initiative, reflecting CEF's commitment to gender equality and household well-being. Women's active involvement in kitchen gardening, nutrition education, and savings groups contributed to increased decision-making power over food consumption and financial management within households. This empowerment dynamic strengthened not only economic resilience but also social cohesion and family stability.

The project also contributed to improved knowledge and awareness regarding the link between agriculture, nutrition, and health. Community members gained a clearer understanding of how diversified food production supports child growth, maternal health, and overall well-being. This knowledge shift fostered sustainable behavioral change beyond the immediate project cycle.

Monitoring and follow-up visits were conducted to assess crop performance, group savings progress, and nutrition outcomes. These visits provided opportunities for technical guidance and adaptive support. Beneficiaries reported increased food availability, improved dietary diversity, enhanced savings capacity, and greater confidence in managing economic challenges.

Through the integrated support to 300 households; approximately 1,800 individuals, the project strengthened both nutritional outcomes and community-based financial systems. Improved agricultural practices enhanced local food production, while savings and loan groups established durable financial safety nets. Together, these interventions contributed to reduced dependency on external assistance and increased household resilience.

CEF's Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture and Community Financial Resilience programming demonstrates the effectiveness of integrated approaches that address multiple dimensions of vulnerability simultaneously. By linking food production, nutrition education, and financial inclusion, the organization fosters sustainable development pathways rooted in community empowerment.

Looking ahead, CEF aims to expand climate-resilient agricultural techniques, strengthen market linkages for surplus produce, enhance advanced nutrition education programming, and scale up savings group networks across additional communities. Continued integration of agricultural

development and financial systems will remain central to building resilient households capable of withstanding future economic and environmental shocks.

Through sustained commitment to nutrition-sensitive agriculture and community-based financial resilience, CEF contributes to healthier families, stronger local economies, and communities equipped to secure their own well-being and development trajectory.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE YEAR

CEF has achieved tremendous achievements for 2025 in all areas of program, operation, finance, supply chain, and human resources. Under the programmatic improvement, CEF generated \$621,848.74 from SCI, UNDP, SSHF, and membership contributions. CEF reached **23,761** beneficiaries with Protection, FSL, and Nutrition. Under finance, there was great improvement in reporting and compliance, finance team were trained, and they are now experts in their field. CEF adopted the use of the new management system called the Numinote and it has improved operation and finance management. Supply chain department received training from SCI to improve their operation. CEF reestablished its office in Aweil since it left the area in 2022.

## FINANCE STATEMENTS

(Only show infographic statements here because the detailed finance statements may not be relevant to many audiences)

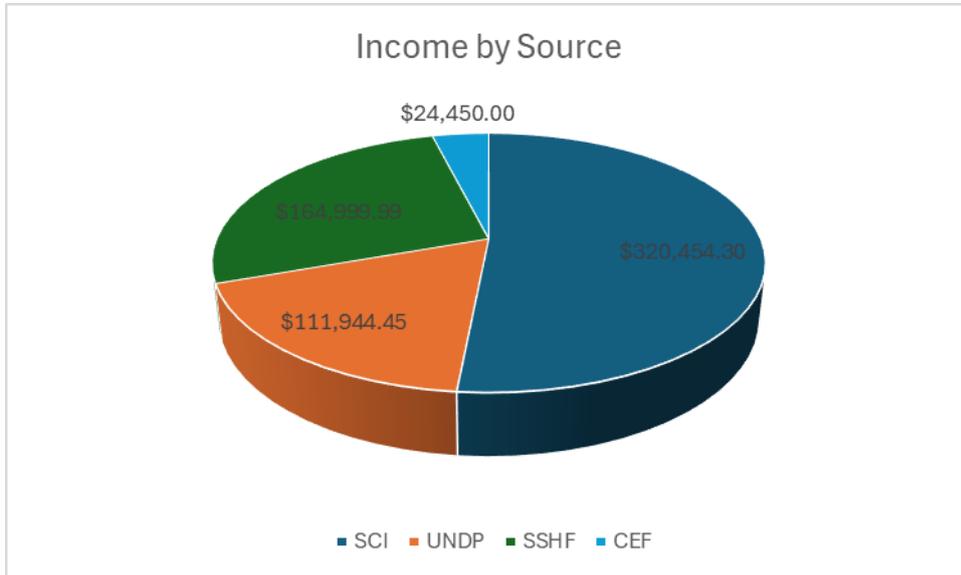


Figure 7: Income by Source, 2025

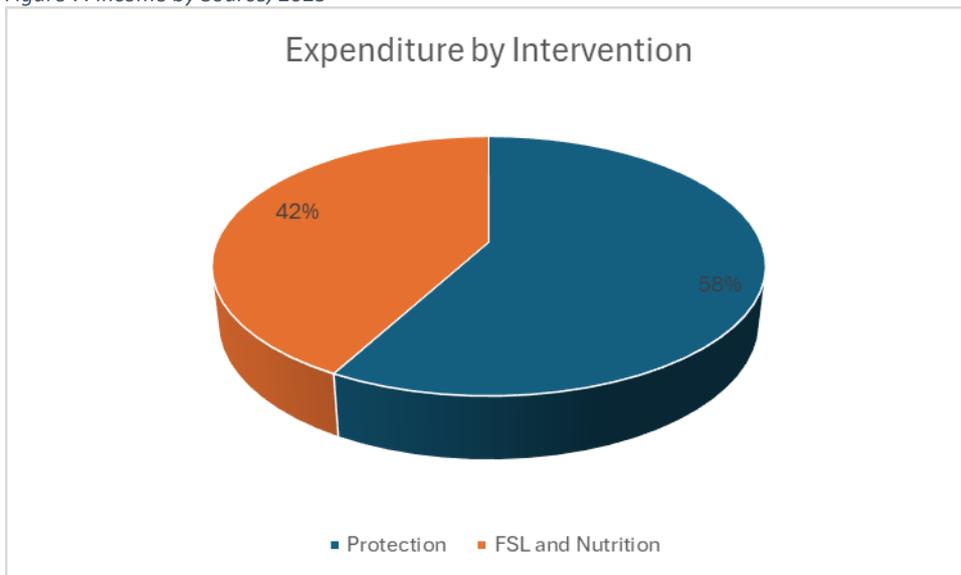


Figure 8: Expenditure by Intervention, 2025

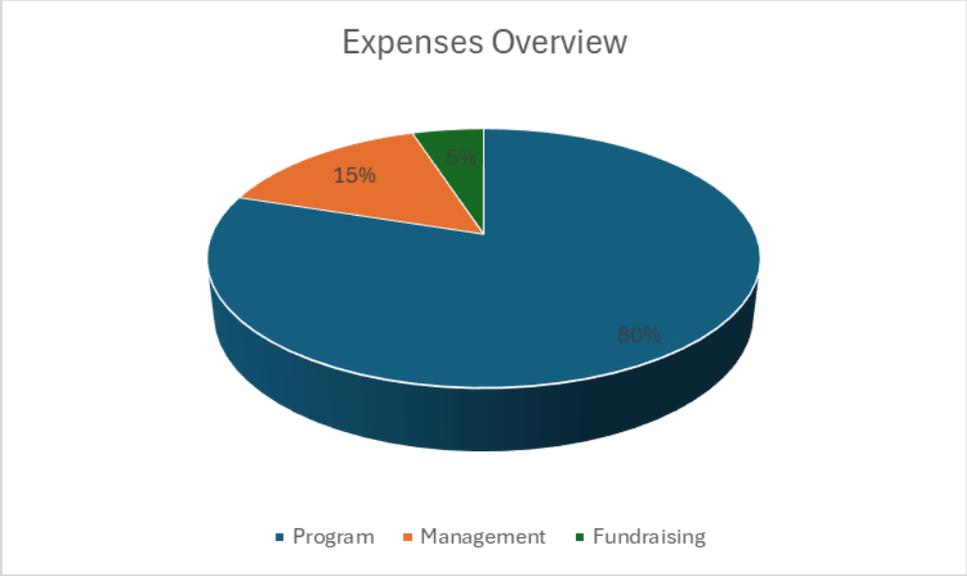


Figure 9: Expenses Overview, 2025

## AWARDS, GRANTS, LOANS, AND DONATIONS

S#	Project	Amount	Source
1.	Community-led Approaches to Addressing the Drivers of Violence and Vulnerability and Promoting Spaces for Conflict Prevention	\$111,944.45	UNDP
2.	SSJR 2024-2026	\$182,837.10	SCI
3.	Rapid Funding for Lifesaving Protection Services for Returnees from Sudan in Aweil East and Centre	\$164,999.99	SSHF
4.	Board Contribution	\$24450	CEF
5.	Danida	\$137,617.20	SCI
Total		<b>\$621,848.74</b>	

## ROSTER

S#	Name in Full	Position
1.	Abiar Ajith Lual	Chair
2.	Malual Jacob Runrach	Secretary/ED
3.	Leek Gai Kurwal	Member
4.	Anai Mary Gai	Member